CLAIMS

1.   A method in a computer system for filtering unauthorized electronic mail messages that are sent by senders to a user, each sender having an identification, each electronic mail message including the identification of the sender, the method comprising:

providing a list of the identifications of the senders who are authorized to send an electronic mail message to the user;

for each of a plurality of electronic mail messages,

determining whether the sender of the electronic mail message is authorized by determining whether the identification of sender in the electronic mail message is in the provided list of the identifications of the senders who are authorized;

when the sender of the electronic mail message is determined to be authorized, storing the electronic mail message in a first folder designated for electronic mail messages received from authorized senders;

when the sender of the electronic mail message is determined to be not authorized, storing the electronic mail message in a second folder designated for electronic mail messages received from unauthorized senders

whereby the electronic mail messages are automatically stored in the appropriate folder based on whether the sender is authorized so that the user can view the first folder containing the electronic mail messages sent by authorized senders separately from the second folder containing the electronic mail messages sent by unauthorized senders.

2.   The method of claim 1 wherein when the user sends an electronic mail message to a recipient, the identification of the recipient is automatically added to the provided list of the identifications of senders who are authorized to send electronic mail message to the user.

3.   The method of claim 1 wherein the provided list of the identifications of the senders is generated by adding the identification of senders of previously received electronic mail messages.

4.   The method of claim 1 wherein the provided list of the identifications of the senders is generated by adding the identification of recipients of previously sent electronic mail messages.

5.   A method in a computer system for filtering unauthorized messages, each message having a sender, the method comprising:

for each of a plurality of messages,

determining whether the sender of the message is designated as being authorized;

when the sender of the message is determined to be authorized, indicating that the message is from an authorized sender; and

when the sender of the message is determined to be not authorized, indicating that the message is from an unauthorized sender.

6.   The method of claim 5 wherein the recipient of the messages can identify whether a message is authorized based solely on the indications.

7.   The method of claim 5 wherein the message is indicated as authorized by storing in a pre-designated location for messages sent by authorized senders.

8.   The method of claim 7 wherein the message is an electronic mail message and the pre-designated location is a folder.

9.   The method of claim 5 including when displaying a list of
messages, displaying a visual indication as to whether the message has been
indicated as being sent from an authorized or unauthorized sender.

10.   The method of claim 9 wherein the visual indication is the
dimming of the messages that are sent from unauthorized senders in the list of
messages.

11.   The method of claim 5 wherein the computer system
includes a list of authorized senders and wherein the determining whether the
sender of the message is designated as being authorized includes determining
whether the sender is in the list of authorized senders.

12.   The method of claim 11 wherein the list of authorized
senders is generated by adding the senders of the previously received messages to
the list.

13.   The method of claim 11 wherein the list of authorized
senders is generated by adding the recipients of the previously sent messages to
the list.

14.   The method of claim 11 wherein the list is shared by
multiple users.

15.   The method of claim 14 wherein the computer system
includes a personal list of authorized senders that is personalized to the recipient
and wherein a message is determined to be sent by a sender designated as
unauthorized when the sender is not in either list.

16.   The method of claim 11 wherein when the recipient sends a
message to an intended recipient, the intended recipient is added to the list as an
authorized sender.

17.   The method of claim 5 wherein the indicating that the
message is from an unauthorized sender includes forwarding the message to
another user.

18.   The method of claim 17 wherein the other user sends a
forwarded message back to the recipient when the message should be viewed by
the recipient even though the sender is not authorized.

19.   The method of claim 5 wherein the indicating that the
message is from an unauthorized sender includes deleting the message.

20.   An electronic mail system comprising:

a receiving component that receives electronic mail messages that
include the identification of the sender of the electronic mail message;

an authorized sender list having the identification of senders who
are authorized to send electronic mail messages; and

an authorization component that is forwarded electronic mail
messages from the receiving component and that provides an indication when the
identification of the sender of the forwarded electronic mail message is not in the
authorized sender list.

21.   The system of claim 20 including an updated authorized
sender list component that adds the identification of each recipient of sent
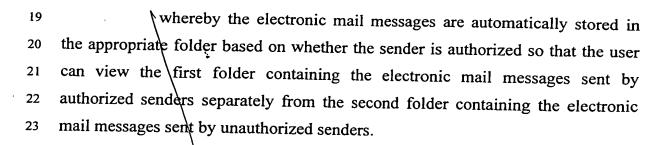electronic mail messages to the authorized sender list.

22.   The system of claim 20 including an updated authorized
sender list component that scans previously received electronic mail messages
and adds the identification of the sender to the authorized sender list.

23.   The system of claim 20 wherein the provided indication is
the storing of the forwarded electronic mail message in a junk mail folder.

24.   The system of claim 20 wherein the provided indication is
the deletion of the forwarded electronic mail message.

25.   A method in a computer system for filtering unauthorized
electronic mail messages that are sent by senders to a user, each sender having an
identification, each electronic mail message including the identification of the
sender, the method comprising:

providing a list of the identifications of the senders who are
authorized to send an electronic mail message to the user;

for each of a plurality of electronic mail messages,

determining whether the sender of the electronic mail
message is authorized by determining whether the identification of sender in the
electronic mail message is in the provided list of the identifications of the senders
who are authorized;

when the sender of the electronic mail message is
determined to be authorized, storing the electronic mail message in a first folder
designated for electronic mail messages received from authorized senders;

when the sender of the electronic mail message is
determined to be not authorized, storing the electronic mail message in a second
folder designated for electronic mail messages received from unauthorized
senders

19　　　　　　whereby the electronic mail messages are automatically stored in
20　the appropriate folder based on whether the sender is authorized so that the user
21　can view the first folder containing the electronic mail messages sent by
22　authorized senders separately from the second folder containing the electronic
23　mail messages sent by unauthorized senders.

1　　　　　26.　　The method of claim 25 wherein when the user sends an
2　electronic mail message to a recipient, the identification of the recipient is
3　automatically added to the provided list of the identifications of senders who are
4　authorized to send electronic mail message to the user.

1　　　　　27.　　The method of claim 25 wherein the provided list of the
2　identifications of the senders is generated by adding the identification of senders
3　of previously received electronic mail messages.

1　　　　　28.　　The method of claim 25 wherein the provided list of the
2　identifications of the senders is generated by adding the identification of
3　recipients of previously sent electronic mail messages.